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Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 21, 2001 LB 827

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. President. Believe it or not, I do appreciate the amount of debate we've had on the bill. I don't think a lot of people realize, and the media certainly doesn't realize, how important this issue is. This issue is tremendously important for Nebraska and we want to do the right thing, and we want to make sure that we make use of any available resources to roll out any advanced technology that's available as rapidly and as reasonably as we possibly can, and I think everyone agrees to that premise. The persons that disagree with the bill certainly have some valid points, but it is so difficult you cannot rationalize and generalize on a bill like this. Every action you take in this particular public policy area has a cause and effect. And could I agree that we should let public service or public power provide services where none are provided? I could agree with that premise. When you start thinking about the implications of that and how you structure that and how you...how you create a level playing field for future deployment of services, it becomes much more complicated than that. I would...I would ask you to, as you have time before the bill comes up again, I've got a little material based on the Iowa model and, in fact, Iowa decided to take an initiative on the state level and provide a lot of infrastructure. There also have been some cities in Iowa that have provided services in advanced technology. Now it seems, after some experience with that, the Governor is going to great extent to assure private enterprise that they're not going to compete with them and that they should feel comfortable making capital investments in new technology. They're having to react to the effect of the public investment that they've made and the disincentive they've provided, so we have to keep that in mind as well. One thing that it seems like everyone agrees with that I've heard speak that this bill does is that it clearly says that we'll not allow our public power districts or our cities to engage in the business of telecommunications. That is...that is significant policy statement and it seems that we...I've not heard articulated arguments, other than some allusion to that by Senator Chambers, that we don't all agree with that premise. Senator Beutler suggested some scenarios under which he might support the public sector providing services as well. Secondly, the bill again provides a mechanism, if the public and private sector wish to cooperate, for using the dark fiber resources